

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Method for cooling or quenching slabs and sheets (2) with water, comprising the steps of: setting the slabs and sheets upright with a tilting device (18); lowering the slabs and sheets vertically into in a cooling basin (1, 14), into which the slabs and sheets, which have first been set upright by a tilting device (18), are lowered and temporarily maintaining the slabs and sheets maintained on edge so that the slabs or sheets define a vertical plane; directing, wherein cooling water is directed laterally to the plane of the slabs or sheets and against both sides of the slabs and sheets (2); and selectively changing a level of the water in the cooling basin so that the slabs and sheets are selectively sprayed with the water when both above and below the level of the water in the cooling basin.

2. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the slabs and sheets (2) are fully immersed in the [[all]]

cooling basin (1) filled with water, and, in addition, the cooling water is directed against them in the water bath of the cooling basin (1).

3. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with Claim 2, wherein a water level in the cooling basin (1, 14) is lowered, the slabs and sheets (2) project above the water level (13a), and the cooling water is directed at the slabs and sheets (2).

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously presented) Method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the cooling water is directed by jets, and the water pressure and/or the volume flow of the cooling water jets is automatically controlled.

6. (Previously presented) Method in accordance with Claim 5, wherein the distance of the jets (10; 11a, 11b) from the surface of the slabs and sheets (2) is automatically controlled.

7. (Currently amended) Device for cooling or quenching slabs and sheets (2) with water in a cooling basin (1, 14), into which the slabs and sheets, which have first been set upright by

a tilting device (18), are lowered and temporarily maintained on edge, especially for carrying out the method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the cooling basin (1) has jet devices (10; 11a, 11b), which are arranged on both sides of the lowered vertically arranged slabs/sheets (2), are directed laterally to the plane of the slabs/sheets and towards their broadside surfaces of the slabs/sheets, and are connected to a cooling water circulation (12), which has means (25a, 25b and 29) for lowering the water level from a maximum, upper water level (13b) to a low, lower water level (13a) so that the slabs and sheets are selectively sprayed with the water when both above and below the level of the water in the cooling basin.

8. (Previously presented) Device in accordance with Claim 7, wherein the cooling basin (1) is connected by flow with a pump receiving basin (14).

9. (Previously presented) Device in accordance with Claim 7, and further comprising a raisable and lowerable carriage (9), wherein the cooling basin (1) is designed with tracks (9) for the raisable and lowerable carriage (3) that holds a slab or a sheet (2).

10. (Previously presented) Device in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the carriage (3) is connected to a cable drive (4).

11. (Previously presented) Device in accordance with Claim 10, wherein the cable drive (4) has cables (7), which are guided by cable drums (5) mounted on the carriage (3), and the cable drums (5) are mechanically coupled with a frequency-controlled three-phase motor.

12. (Previously presented) Device in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the carriage (3) is guided on the tracks (9) by rollers or wheels (8).